

November 13, 2008

To: Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

From: Linda Krop, Chair, Conservation Working Group

Re: **CWG Report – November 12, 2008 Meeting**

**Attendance:** Linda Krop, Chair (EDC); Greg Helms, Vice Chair (The Ocean Conservancy); Jean Holmes (LWVSB); Shiva Polefka (EDC); Kira Redmond (SB Channelkeeper); Jackie Dragon (Sea Flow); Vic Cox, Patricia Duffy

**CINMS Staff Present:** Sean Hastings

## **I. INTRODUCTIONS**

## **II. OCEAN ACIDIFICATION**

- A. **Next Actions – CINMS:** Following unanimous adoption of the CWG's Ocean Acidification report by the Sanctuary Advisory Council, the report was submitted to the Sanctuary Superintendent for consideration and potential implementation. Since that time, CINMS staff have taken the following actions: (1) a meeting with Dr. Gretchen Hoffman at UCSB, including discussions about installing monitoring stations in and near the Santa Barbara Channel (possibly using weather buoys) and using Sanctuary vessels to assist in research efforts; and (2) a meeting with David Siegel at UCSB to discuss the potential for collecting transect-based data as part of his ongoing research.
- B. **Next Actions – CWG:** Our main focus will be to reach out to other Sanctuaries around the country. Shiva (the primary report author) has been following up with other West Coast Sanctuaries, starting with contacts with the Conservation Working Groups. He and Linda will also contact Bill Douros, the West Coast Regional Director for the Sanctuary Program. Shiva talked with Mike Murray about other ideas. As a result of this conversation, Shiva will make a presentation to the CINMS staff on December 2, so that all staff (including those involved with education, research, etc.) will be aware of the report and have the opportunity to participate in its implementation. Mike and Shiva also discussed the possibility of providing a presentation at the 2009 SAC Chairs meeting in May. Finally, Shiva will follow up with Dr. Fabry to learn more about her research and monitoring efforts.

## **III. WHALES AND SHIPPING**

- A. **Report from CINMS Staff:** Sean provided an update regarding the 2008 blue whale season. Sightings fluctuated, with a current decline as expected due to the end of the migration season. The notices to mariners will probably stop by December 1. The data shows that ships are not slowing down in response to the notices. A fin whale was struck and killed recently in Southern California. We should ask for information about the ship (including route, speed, etc.). Also, a dead blue whale was spotted near Catalina; the cause of death is unknown.

- B. Emergency Response Plan:** Sean reported that the Plan was useful in promoting better coordination between agencies in handling overflights and monitoring. The agencies will review the Plan and update it for 2009. One key goal is to increase the collection of data from ocean users, and not rely so heavily on whale watching concessionaires, which do not cover the entire Channel area.
- C. Phase II of the Subcommittee Process:** This phase is focused on long-term strategies to protect whales from shipping, and will involve efforts by the Subcommittee as well as some of the SAC Working Groups. Sean reported that the SET is working with staff and the Marine Exchange to improve education to shippers and the public. They will begin their outreach to shippers by focusing on the “frequent flyers” (companies with the most ships in the Channel). The RAP has offered to help by reaching out to whale experts on an as-needed basis. The SAC Subcommittee will bring a recommendation to the SAC to request case studies from other regions and programs, including Glacier Bay, Stellwagon Bank, and Hawaiian Islands. Shiva and the rest of the CWG recommended adding the Green Flag program in the Ports of LA and Long Beach, which has been effective in reducing ship speeds. The case studies will provide information and a basis for developing a suite of recommendations for consideration by the Subcommittee and SAC.
- D. Ocean Protection Council meeting:** Linda, Sean and Shiva will attend an OPC meeting on November 17 to brief the State on the issues and explore opportunities for working together in developing solutions.

#### **IV. Marine Reserves/MLPA**

- A. CINMS Marine Reserves:** The SAC will receive a presentation regarding the Channel Islands 5-Year Report.
- B. MLPA:** Greg reported that he attended a two-day Regional Stakeholders Group meeting, and will participate in the next meeting on November 18 and 19 in Ventura. Sean will be working  $\frac{3}{4}$  time on the MLPA process. The CWG discussed the relationship of the Channel Islands Reserves to the MLPA process. The CWG would like the state to recognize the success and value of the Channel Islands reserves, and commit to continue developing data from such reserves so that this information can be used to help inform and advise the MLPA process.

#### **V. Other**

- A. Management Plan:** Sean reported that the CINMS hopes to have full approval for the Management Plan by the end of the year.
- B. Scripps low-energy marine seismic survey:** NMFS contacted the CINMS for input on the proposal.